



Madison County Board Votes To Take Some Privileges Away From Chairman Prenzler

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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EDWARDSVILLE - The Madison County Board voted on Wednesday night to stop hiring and firing privileges for Board Chairman Kurt Prenzler during a spirited, well-attended special meeting.

Prenzler commented afterward that he definitely disagreed with the 19-6 vote to limit his privileges without board approval. The board members who voted in favor of the power restraints said that a big part of the reason for the decision was the amount of money that had been paid out in lawsuits from former county employees.

“I will remain fighting for the taxpayers, and I will listen to and work for the citizens of Madison County,” Prenzler said. “I didn’t think what they did was legal in certain respects, but only time will tell.”

The board appears also planning for a vote on installing a chairman pro tem, who if approved, would serve as a vice-chairman and take over some of Prenzler's duties.



Some board members said Prenzler's judgment was put in focus after a letter he signed surfaced in his unsuccessful bid to oust fellow Republican Denise Wiehardt from her Granite City County Board seat.

“Many of my fellow county board members of both parties have been concerned about Chairman Prenzler’s judgment, especially relating to personnel decisions and appointments, for quite some time,” Stacey Pace (R-Troy). “The losses from expensive lawsuits and staff turnover have piled up. But these offensive misogynistic comments about Denise, a written letter no less, were the last straw. It has to end.”

“This is about Board oversight and authority in Board appointments and administration. And frankly, this is long overdue,” said Eric Foster (R-Granite City). “The lack of leadership, bad personnel decisions, and the revolving door of department heads have to stop, so citizens can be served well by their tax dollars.”

Other GOP Countywide officials supported the Board’s move: “We all believe these proposed changes are reasonable and responsible. We fully support them,” said Circuit Clerk Tom McRae, County Auditor David Michael, State’s Attorney Tom Haine, Treasurer Chris Slusser, and Regional Superintendent of Schools Rob Werden in a separate press statement sent out Tuesday. “As independently elected officials, we need the County administration to work smoothly and efficiently so we can do our jobs well.

“Every Republican county-wide elected official agrees that Chairman Prenzler’s inept management and bad judgment is wasting taxpayer resources and harming our abilities to serve the citizens of Madison County. This action is long overdue, and we commend the Board's leadership in pursuing these ordinance updates even in the face of personal attacks.”

Randy Harris, the Democratic Party chairman in Madison County provided this statement: “None of the issues raised in calling for this Special Meeting are new, these have all been known for a great deal of time, if these Republicans expect us to believe they just now saw the light, they must not think much of the general public.”

Prenzler was elected and started as chairman in December 2016 and he has kept on campaign pledges to reduce taxes in Madison County. One of the things he says he will continue to push is to have Madison County be part of the state’s PTELL, which offers tax protection for the county. He said about 80 percent of the counties in Illinois fall under the PTELL jurisdiction. He has not been able to get the votes to move Madison County into the PTELL program.

The Property Tax Extension Limitation Law (PTELL) limits the number of tax extensions (total taxes billed) for non-home rule taxing districts.

